



ABOUT THE SHOW

Since its premiere in Jan. 2000, this energetic musical has thrilled school audiences with its dramatic songs, memorable characters and powerful messages. The youthful dialog and the realistic characterizations by this all-child ensemble create a palpable audience response in a school assembly setting. Post show forums with the cast have encouraged many school children to take an interest in the performing arts. The extremely relevant issues of bullying and peer pressure are at the core of this musical. "The New Kid" has also served as the centerpiece for many school's anti-bullying program. The

significant themes, combined with the dramatic story, funky dances, "show-stopper" songs, comic scenes and a powerful conclusion, have earned this show rave reviews at every venue at which it is performed.

"The New Kid" tells the story of Zack, a new student at P.S. 32, who is suddenly faced with the exciting possibility of being in the "popular crowd." He is asked to perform 3 "tests" and do things he feels are not right. He gives in to peer pressure and takes the tests, but becomes increasingly unhappy as he realizes he is not being true to himself, and even hurting people in the process. In the end, he discovers it is best to follow one's own path and to "just be yourself." His courage in standing up for his beliefs inspires his entire school to change. This timely piece uses satire to enable kids to see the dangers of bullying, peer pressure, teasing, cliques and hazing. It offers one possible solution to clique-related school social problems by showing a lead character who stands up for what he believes in.

SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1: The students get ready for their first day of school. *Song:* "P.S. 32."

SCENE 2: Recess. Zack arrives and all the kids point him out as "the new kid." Zack talks to the audience about his fear that kids won't like him and his desire to be popular. *Song:* "The New Kid." Samantha introduces herself to Zack and explains the different "squads." She tells him that she isn't on any squad, since she wanted to be friends with kids on different squads. As a result, Kelly called her a "double agent" and wouldn't let her be in any group.

SCENE 3: The Gangsta's introduce themselves to Zack. *Song:* "Gangsta Rap." Dre tells Zack that he has to take three "tests" if he wants to be a part of the Gangsta squad. His first task is to copy homework from a Brainiac. His second task is to kiss a girl. The Mods enter and Zack is told he must kiss Christy.

SCENE 4: Zack meets Eleanore, Maddie and Rachel. Eleanore volunteers to help Zack with his homework. Maddie and Rachel exit; Zack and Eleanore sit together, completing the homework. Zack leaves and Maddie re-enters. She is convinced that Zack has a crush on Eleanore but, although Eleanore really likes Zack, she can't understand why he would like her. *Song:* "Girl Like Me." The Mods enter and tell Eleanore that Zack only spent time with her so that he could copy her homework - in order to be initiated into the Ganstas. *Song:* "Popular." During the song, the Mods make fun of the Brainiacs.

Finally, they leave. Eleanore and Maddie decide to ignore the Mods and that Eleanore will continue to help Zack with the homework.

SCENE 5: The kids change classes. Zack is studying with all the other kids, but he can't concentrate because of his new feelings for Eleanore. *Song*: "I Just Met A Girl."

SCENE 6: Class lets out. Zack is left alone in the hallway. He imagines what he will say to his mom when he gets home from school. Suddenly, he notices a frog on the ground. He picks it up and Louis enters, looking for his frog. Zack gives him back his frog. The two get to talking and discover that they have a lot in common. Most especially, they enjoy wrestling, and act out some of their favorite moves.

SCENE 7: All the kids enter. *Song*: "Nothing We Can Do." The kids sing about their social difficulties at the school. Samantha tells Zack that Eleanore wants to do homework with him again. Zack, concerned that he is supposed to kiss Christy, asks Samantha to say something to Eleanore so that she doesn't try to find him and see him with Christy. Samantha leaves and Christy enters, chewing her gum and ready for her kiss. Before Zack knows what is happening, Christy is kissing him. Eleanore enters, sees Zack and Christy kissing, drops her book and runs offstage. The Gangstaz enter. *Song*: "Gangsta Rap-Reprise." The Gangstaz are impressed that Zack has passed his first test. They remind him that now he has to beat up a Geek.

SCENE 8: Eleanore enters, disappointed in what she just saw. *Song*: "Out of My Mind." Zack enters, and joins in the song, though the two don't see each other. Zack admits to Eleanore that he was supposed to copy her homework in order to pass a test, and that he feels bad about the kiss with Christy. Eleanore leaves, saying that she doesn't know who she can trust anymore.

SCENE 9: Louis and Joey talk with Zack about how they can avoid fighting with him. They come up with a plan so that Zack can stay in the good graces of both the Gangstaz and the Geeks. *Song*: "Our Friend Zack." The three boys decide that they will fake the fight, using the wrestling moves they have been practicing.

SCENE 10: Samantha finds Zack between classes. He admits that he hasn't liked himself much lately. He feels like he's been acting like a different person in order to fit in. Samantha gives him some advice. *Song*: "Just Be Yourself."

SCENE 11: Recess. All the kids are onstage. *Song*: "The Fight." Zack tells Louis that he is nervous about going through with their plan. They go ahead with it anyway, and Zack pretends to beat up Louis. Dre announces Zack the champion, and proclaims that he is now part of the Gangsta squad. Dre begins to torment Louis, beating him up as he lies on the ground. Finally, he grabs Louis' frog and throws him onto the air. Louis crawls to his frog, begging that he not be dead. Dre makes fun of him and starts to beat up on him again. Zack yells "stop!" and everyone is silent for a moment, shocked that Zack has stood up to the bully. Zack tells Dre that he doesn't want to be part of his squad. He apologizes to Louis and the rest of his classmates. *Song*: "Finale." Zack announces that he is starting a new squad – "the everyone squad" – and that anyone can join it. One by one, the kids join him, standing together and singing. Louis notices that his frog is still moving and that he is alive! Everyone cheers and the kids finish the song together.